

M&O  
Serials  
QL 671  
.G84

THE  
MONTHLY



Volume 28

San Francisco, California, October, 1946

Number 10

### Camp Fires versus Bird Life

It is far from the aim of the writer to discourage so pleasing and essential a phenomenon as a warm and cheerful camp fire for those of us who choose to live close to nature for a few days or weeks each year. Yet during a recent sojourn of this kind to D. L. Bliss State Park at Rubicon Point on the shore of Lake Tahoe the relationship between the camp fire and the presence of certain birds came to mind. The stimulus for such speculation was a recent ruling passed by the California Division of Parks prohibiting the collecting of wood by visitors within our State Parks. The obvious reason for this regulation, similar to that enforced in many National Park camps, is to prevent the inexperienced and thoughtless, as well as the ruthless, from cutting down live trees or defacing the primeval beauty of fallen giants or even lesser dignitaries of the forest. The prevention of the trimming of the living and dead lower limbs of trees in such sanctuaries is another valid reason. Too often have we seen camp grounds where nary a limb could be reached by the hand and an atmosphere of "park-like" artificiality prevailed.

Perhaps again we have considered the results of such prohibitive measures from the purely esthetic standpoint — as a means of keeping samples of our out-of-doors heritage as natural appearing as possible. During a two weeks stay at Rubicon Point the significant role such integral parts of the forest play in influencing the birdlife was once again impressed upon the writer. How many birds rely to a great extent upon these lower dead limbs for perches from which to fly out after insects in the surrounding air of the forest substratum? Removal of these vantage points from which to forage means the partial or even complete elimination of certain species dependent on them, such as Western Wood Pewees and Wright Flycatchers.

Dead trees and stumps present an environment in themselves and their presence or absence determines the presence or absence of a host of avian species. Chickadees, nuthatches and woodpeckers of several kinds are dependent to a large degree upon such parts of the forest. Sometimes they are a source of insect food but more often they are essential as homesites for hole-nesting birds. Once removed, their replacement is a slow and tedious process which requires many years. During this interval these birds will be lacking from those regions where they would afford the greatest pleasure to man.

The next time you are out, therefore do not suffer from cold or go without

a warm meal, but hesitate before you strip the trees of their lower dead limbs or fell a snag for firewood in often frequented camp sites. First see if some other sources of fuel, such as fallen branches and cones, are not available and will not equally well suit your needs.

—Robert T. Orr, *California Academy of Sciences*

### **"For the Study and the Protection of Birds"**

It is not enough for us to put a few crumbs out for the birds when many channels of service are open, through which constructive work may be accomplished. So that we, as an organization, might take an active part in conservation work, certain projects have been suggested by our president.

The Hastings Natural History Reservation, where students from the University of California are trained in field work, maintains a large bird-banding station. When asked how the Audubon Association might help out, Dr. Linsdale, who directs the work there, suggested that we might like to share in the purchasing of more traps to be used in the banding of birds for study. Small traps may be obtained for \$1.50 and the large ones are \$4.50. Individuals who wish to help in this work may send contributions ear-marked for this purpose to our treasurer, Miss Ivander MacIver.

It has been suggested also that members might have books, periodicals and laboratory equipment not in use, which might be of value to groups such as the Student Section of the California Academy of Sciences. Perhaps the Audubon Association might serve as a clearing house through which such materials may be placed where they will be used to good advantage.

### **Audubon Screen Tours**

The California Academy of Sciences is presenting the Audubon Screen Tours as part of the Scaife Lecture Series. Colored motion pictures will illustrate the lectures of such talented speakers as Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., C. A. Harwell, Howard Cleaves, Allan Cruickshank, and Carl H. Maslowski. The first lecture of the series, "Wilderness Mischief" by Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., will be held at 8:00 p. m. on November 7, 1946. The lecture will be given in the auditorium of the P. G. & E. Company, located at 245 Market Street in San Francisco. Members of the Audubon Association and their friends are cordially invited to attend.

### **New Names for Old Birds**

Confusion has arisen through the use of certain vernacular names in recent issues of "The Gull" which were unfamiliar to some of the members. There has always been a great deal of variation in common names, some birds having a half-dozen or more. In the recent book, "The Distribution of the Birds of California" by Dr. Alden H. Miller and Dr. Joseph Grinnell, (Pacific Coast Avifauna, Number 27), common names have been assigned which indicate the specific relationship of all of the races of one species. For example, all of the ten subspecies of Bewick Wren which occur in California are called simply "Bewick Wren", instead of each race being designated by separate and unrelated

names, such as "Baird's Wren", "Vigor's Wren" etc., as was done in 1931 edition of the A.O.U. Check-list. This attempt to stabilize common names by Dr. Miller and Dr. Grinnell was not a new procedure, but the carrying through to completion of a trend which was evident in the Check-list in the case of Fox Sparrows, Song Sparrows, etc.

As we are concerned only with the identification of species in the field, it seems wise to follow the streamlined classification given in "The Distribution of the Birds of California". To avoid further confusion, however, the common names of birds as given in the A.O.U. Check-list will be printed in parentheses when these differ from those given in "The Distribution of the Birds of California."

—Grace Irene Crowe, *California Academy of Sciences*

### September Field Trip

On Sunday, September 15, seventeen members and fifteen guests met at noon in Alameda to study birds at Bay Farm Island. The day was sunny but windy, with a touch of autumn in the air. Under the capable leadership of Mr. Charles A. Bryant, we first explored the tule land along the road near the bridge and skirting the golf links. Two interesting observations were made here. A beautiful play of soft color was noted when two Mourning Doves, perched near us, flew in the sun. The behavior of a Barn Swallow and her two young was watched. We then drove over to the pond, ate lunch, and waited for the tide to recede. Water birds were always in sight, singly or in flocks, but the highlight of the afternoon came last, when, shortly after five o'clock, an unusually large flock of Black-bellied Plover settled on a mud-flat near us and walked quietly along, facing into the wind. The following twenty-seven species were observed.

Egret	Western Sandpiper	Mourning Dove (Western)
Mallard (Common)	Marbled Godwit	Barn Swallow
Pintail (American)	Sanderling	California Jay
Ruddy Duck	American Avocet	Loggerhead Shrike (Calif.)
Sparrow Hawk	Western Gull	Western Meadowlark
Black-bellied Plover	Bonaparte Gull	Red-winged Blackbird
Killdeer	California Gull	House Finch (Common)
Long-billed Curlew	Caspian Tern	Savannah Sparrow
Willet (Western)	Forster Tern	Brewer Blackbird

Phila M. Helt, *Historian*

### Woodpeckers Win Building Priority

A clipping from a trade journal, sent in for "The Gull's" file by Mr. Charles A. Bryant, tells how the Mississippi Power and Light Company solved the problem of woodpecker damage to telephone poles. Such efforts as filling woodpecker holes with concrete, painting white rings around the poles, or nailing imitation snakes to them all proved futile, but Division Superintendent V. K. Smith hit upon an idea which virtually stopped a major cause of pole replacement.

"The effective remedy is to save the holed section of the old pole and bolt it at the top of the new pole. The woodpeckers seem to confine their activities to the old, damaged timber, completely ignoring the new pole."

## September Meeting

The regular meeting of the Audubon Association of the Pacific was held in the San Francisco Public Library at 8:00 p. m. on September 12, 1946, with the president, Miss Jean Bradford Fay, presiding.

Vacation observations were presented by a number of the members. Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Mulligan were our guests from Washington, D. C. Mr. Mulligan, who is chairman of the Boy Scouts of South Maryland, told us of their work in the east.

The evening's program was presented by Mr. C. A. Bryant, past president and a member of the association for twenty-three years. Mr. Bryant showed a very interesting series of kodachrome slides of Arizona cacti which he and Mr. L. Ph. Bolander had taken on a recent desert trip.

—Jean DuBois, *Recording Secretary*

## October Meeting

On Thursday, October 10, the 349th meeting of the Audubon Association will be held at 8:00 p. m. in the Oakland Public Museum. Miss Alice S. Mulford, Curator, will tell about her work. San Francisco members take the "A" Train at the Key System Terminal, get off at Oak and 12th Streets, and walk two blocks north on Oak Street to 14th. The museum is located at 1426 Oak Street, on the shore of Lake Merritt. East-bay members take the No. 1 car to Oak and 13th Streets. Walk one block north. Meet at Zerikotes Restaurant, on the lake by the museum, at 6:00 p. m. for a no-host dinner preceding the meeting.

## October Field Trip

On Sunday, October 20, Mr. Walter W. Bradley has invited members of the Audubon Association to visit El Sobrante. San Francisco members take the "L" Richmond bus at the Key System Terminal at 9:20 a. m. Members coming from Oakland, Alameda and Berkeley transfer to the No. 72 bus at Ashby and San Pablo Avenues at 9:15 a. m. Get off at San Pablo and MacDonald in Richmond. Cars will be provided at this point to transport the group to El Sobrante. Bring cup, spoon, luncheon and binoculars. Mr. Walter W. Bradley will be host and leader.

**Audubon Association of the Pacific**

Organized January 25, 1917

## For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President.....Miss Jean Bradford Fay.....2312 Leavenworth St.,  
San Francisco 11  
Corresponding Secretary.....Mr. Joseph J. Webb.....519 California St., San Francisco 4  
Treasurer.....Miss Ivander MacIver.....2414 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley 4  
Editor.....Miss Grace Irene Crowe.....1420 Henry St., Berkeley 7  
Monthly meetings second Thursday, 8:00 p. m.

Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Sts., San Francisco  
Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year  
Student memberships, \$1.50 per year Life memberships, \$50.00